766 When the king is dead, the abiru shave their heads, take off their bracelets, and put on a garment of sycamore bark. Then they choose eight Batutsi or Bahutu belonging to the families of the Abatsobe, the Abagunga, or the Abanyargona, who are in charge of the funeral (abanyamugogo, lit., man with the great log). The corpse is dressed as when the person was alive, rolled in a mat, and placed in an ingobyi (1) resting on a raised hurdle (urutara) set up in

1. Long, boat-shaped basket in which people of high quality are carried.

one of the huts of the royal boma (2).

2. In the past, on the death of the king, two noble Batutsi had their throats cut. This was called gusegurir Umwami (lit., to make the king's pillow). When the Umugabekazi died, two great Batutsi ladies were similarly killed.

For eight days the watchers keep a great fire burning under the hurdle in order to cure the corpse. To speed up the operation the corpse is turned over morning and evening, and to prevent the skin from splitting, the watchers anoint it with butter from time to time.

At dawn of the ninth day, the body is lifted by the watchers, accompanied by a few abiru, and hidden during the day in the rugo of a Munyarwanda. At nightfall, the small group sets out again. Traveling only at night, the funeral procession arrives at Rutare Hill, near Lake Mohasi, the end of the journey. The owner of each rugo, where the bearers have spent the day with the corpse, must drink the gihango (3), the absorption of which will inevitably kill him if he

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3. This gihango is different from the one in question in the blood pact, p. 13. It is a muddy drink in which medicinal herbs are mashed and mixed with wood ash and ash from the powder of the horn of a bull that has killed another bull. The Banyarwanda

● 278

believe that this potion will kill whoever does not speak the truth or reveals a state secret (cf. also Procedure, pp. 104 and 105).

766 dared reveal what he had seen.

The summit of Rutare Hill is crowned with trees, [96] the remains of an ancient forest. The cemetery of the kings and queens can be found there. The abanyamugogo build a hut there, dig a grave, and bury the king and his weapons in it. The hut is closed with beams and surrounded by a thorny enclosure to keep wild animals out. [767] Quite near-by, the watchers build themselves dwellings where they live for two years and are fed during this time by the people of the neighborhood. Then they return home after going through Nyanza where they are showered with gifts. But the Mwami may not see them for he would die during the year if he caught sight of those who have watched over and carried his father's body. For the same reason the abiru who have accompanied them to Rutare may never return to the court of Nyanza. The belief also exists that from [825] the right shoulder of the dead Mwami there issues a worm (urunyo) which, if placed in a pitcher of milk, will grow and become a leopard that kills only those who are wicked and unjust.

When the Mwami dies all work stops for eight days. For two months the bulls are removed from the herds and the king's children may not have any marital relations. Although they are under no obligation to do so, the Banyarwanda behave in the same way.

The death of the Umugabekazi [king's mother] calls for the same ceremonies and the same interdictions, but they are somewhat simplified.

9. Succession to the Throne

643 The king of Ruanda always belongs to the family of the [644] Abanyiginya. His wives (1) are mostly chosen from the clans of the

[644]

1. The king may have four legitimate wives whose children are the only ones who, in theory, can succeed him; he can have as many concubines as he wishes.

Abega and the Abakono.

244 cucumber. They are eaten as a vegetable. Gourds with
[415] variously-shaped fruits are cultivated mainly for use as vessels.

The oil palm (ingasi), which occurs in Urundi only in
314 the interlacustrine area, is not really a plant cultivated by the
[177] Barundi but a wild tree which has been introduced from West Africa. The Barundi use its fruit. The oil palm forest of Mtara is approximately 12 kilometers north of Usumbura. It covers about 800 hectares with 400,000 to 500,000 oil palms (Elaeis guineensis). Closer to Usumbura there is a forest of 200,000 to 220,000 palms, and farther south of Usumbura, stretching to the vicinity of Ujiji, there are other stocks of trees with 300,000 to 400,000 palms. The systematic cultivation of oil
[177] palms was first introduced to the Tanganyika area by the Europeans, but at the present time the forests are exploited neither by Europeans nor by the natives because they are the chief breeding site of the fly that transmits sleeping sickness. For this reason the forests are avoided as much as possible. The
[248] only tree incorporated into their hoe-culture, which is inimical to the cultivation of trees, is the fig from whose bark cloth can be made (see above, pp. 24, 31). This tree is really planted and cared for. The oil palm, however, is only seldom planted by the natives. After dropping from the trees, the nuts thrive easily in the moist soil where oil palm forests usually grow. The majority of the young trees are either pulled up or cut down, and only a few are left standing to replace old dead trees. After cutting down the ripe fruits of the oil palm, they are first scalded in boiling water and then pounded in a mortar until the whole outer layer of flesh containing the oil is detached. The pounded pap is squeezed out by hand into a wooden tub filled with water so that the oil will float on the surface. From there it is scooped
[439] into an earthen pot. It is marketed in smaller pots. Most of it is sold in Ujiji and in the Congo district (Uvira). The Barundi use
[252] the little oil that is left as an ingredient in some of their dishes or
[278] for frying fish, partly also as a skin lotion and as a medicine for the wounds caused by sand fleas (No. 19, p. 291 and 411).
000 Originally the Barundi were not familiar with the use of palm oil

757 there are others which rely on mechanical means for an effect, as, for instance, massage, enema, hot and cold baths, and, further, a small number of surgical operations from the simple [752] opening of a boil to (allegedly) the Caesarean operation (see above, p. 110). Difficult cases are treated by an experienced, skillful umufumu, but for simple cases every father of a family uses a number of household remedies. The art of using them is passed on from father to son. If necessary, a sick neighbor is given the benefit of them also.

[141] Generally, the first remedy tried is hot or cold water. It is used for intensive rubdowns, for long baths in treating skin diseases, aching joints, insomnia, and fever. A Murundi [515] enjoys taking a bath whenever a sufficient supply of water is available, but as soon as possible after the bath he will rub butter on his skin. There are several natural thermal baths in Urundi [312] which are used not only by the people living in the vicinity. For example, a gushing thermal spring whose water temperature is 47° Centigrade is located near Kisagara, a village not far from the Mugera missionary station, and there is another one north of Tschiwitoke in the Ruzizi Valley. A kind of steam bath is given to persons with fever by alternately holding their heads and limbs over a pot of boiling, steaming water (No. 19, p. 183). Enemas of warm water to which some herbal juice has been added are very common. They are given by first introducing the end of a long hollow stalk of reed or a strong leaf folled into the form of a tube into the anus; then the person applying the treatment blows a mouthful of water through the other end of this pipe into the bowels (No. 19, p. 331). Adults frequently give an enema to themselves: they fill one of the long-necked bottle gourds with water, insert the narrow end of the long bottleneck into the anus, and then lift the calabash in such a manner as to permit the water to enter the bowels by its own weight. Enemas are used for stomach-aches of any kind, constipation, diarrhea, fever, etc.

● [278] There are innumerable medicines made of inorganic, vegetable, and animal substances. Among these, poisons play a relatively minor role, for the Barundi do not even know how to make arrows poisonous. The Batwa often use very effective

644 regions. The leaves are prepared at the capital by special employees,
276 men or women, who also risked their lives occasionally for the reasons cited above.

D. The preparation of tobacco juice, which is used for a most unusual and worldly purpose (mukibuno), is entrusted to a group of female servants or young girls in the service of the queen mother. The tobacco leaves are immersed in a liquid of tart and bitter flavor (inkari), in which they are allowed to remain for some time.

The liquid alone is then used by the queen mother and high-
• [278] ranking ladies, who believe that tobacco juice, when prepared in this fashion, is an infallible remedy against the ailment known locally under the name of imisuzi.

This strongly scented solution bears the name of a plant with a pungent odor (umugabagaba) from which the odalisks in charge of this work also draw their name, abanyamugabagaba. The rooms where this curious medication is applied are known at court and among the great chiefs who are all familiar with the famous recipe by special names whose meaning is clear only to those in the know. They are the imikinga, or "secret cabinets," (from gukinga, "to close") and ubugonyi, "public toilets."

E. A group of factotums known as Abanyakambere remain at
644 the disposal of the sovereign, who spends most of his day in the hut called by the name of Ikambere, "the first one," because it stands at the heart of the main courtyard. The function of these valets is to watch over the various objects which make up the room furnishings.
[202] They also carry out the king's orders and relay messages to the other servants. /387/

644 F. There are also the keepers of the treasure. They are
556 called Abanya-byuma.

The Banyarwanda designate all iron objects by the word byuma. Billhooks, axes, graters, knives, bracelets, and especially hoes represent wealth to their owners in terms of their numbers and actual value.

This manner of conceiving and understanding riches gave the keepers of the treasure the name of "people entrusted with the preservation of iron objects (abanya-byuma)." The treasure itself

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On account of this fame[a] the Bakoma have been entrusted with the preparation of an elixir to prolong life called issubyo from the name of the plant which they use for this purpose, hence their name Abanyissubyo, "people of the life beverage," a name and function which they regard as a great honor. In order to make their elixir, the Bakoma, or people from Nkoma's land, look deep into the forest for a kind of moss or mould (urugombyi) which is found on trees. When they have a good amount of it they /390/ burn it all. The ashes are carefully gathered and stored in a safe place. They also use the roots of the plant called issubyo, which they dry in the sun and crush to powder on their flour mill.

The third ingredient of this water of youth is a kind of Lycoperdon called agatumura which resembles the puffball.

Small amounts of these ashes and powders are mixed with beer and handed daily to the king by two representatives of the ancient family. The Hamitic monarch sucks in a few drops through a drinking tube (umuseke or umuheha), rinses his mouth with them once, and immediately spits out the liquid.

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In principle the members of the Bakoma clan are exempt from forced labor and have retained a fair amount of independence (1).

1. Over these last few years, the Hamitic chief who was placed above them had to concern himself only with the observance of European laws and ordinances.

They have no function other than to take turns at court and hand to the monarch the invigorating beverage of which they are the inventors (2).

2. Along with the Basozo, the Bakoma have enjoyed privileges and immunities for the longest period of time. In the "Reign of

a [i.e., of being descended from the best sorceror. --Analyst]

789 The sorcerer mutilator cuts off a tiny piece (isonga) from the tongue,
751 heart, little finger (umuhera), and skin, and these pieces are dried above the hearth. All of this is then enclosed in a small horn, preferably black, which the assassin wears around his neck as a talisman and which guards him not only against his victim but also against the latter's relatives.

It is also good to procure some of the herb called irago or umurago which has been planted on the slain man's grave. /420/ If this is added to the other gruesome items contained by the horn, the talisman becomes more powerful.

We may add that these people charge very high fees for their services. A bull, at least, is required.

C. Sorcerers who preside over ordeals and who prepare the
695 test poisons. Sorcerers of this type bear the name of Abashozi, hence the verbs gushora, "to put someone through a test," and gushoka (a neutral verb) to designate the test itself.

It does seem that here in Ruanda ordeals are employed only in criminal cases and that their sole object is to prove the innocence or culpability of those who submit to them, as was formerly done in the Middle Ages. Our Blacks have such faith and trust in such judicial methods that they believe in their absolute effectiveness. They have never given a thought to the absurdity of those divinatory tests, in which chance and fraud play such a predominant role.

695 Such tests are numerous, but the most widespread is that which
● 278 consists of drinking or smoking the urwizilinga, a kind of shrub that seems to bear at least a superficial resemblance to datura (1). In any

[824]

1. Moavi is used as the test poison practically throughout the rest of Africa. This plant does not seem to exist in Ruanda. The matter, nevertheless, would be worth investigating.

case their effects are similar.

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The maker of test poison usually handles it in the form of a powder which he mixes with water or with pipe tobacco. The accused, male or female, must draw two or three puffs from the pipe. The results are swift. One of the smokers or another, or even several of them at once, is almost immediately seized with a real madness (kussàra) which strips him of his reasoning faculties and which may last sometimes /421/ close to a month, as we were able to verify. The unfortunate victim eats or takes to his lips everything he finds along the way, no matter how unlikely or even repulsive (amabyi!) it may be.

He casts off his clothing, and a mother tosses away her child and goes off, raving or gesticulating like a true lunatic.

Then the intoxicated person sinks into a nightmare-ridden sleep. He talks in his sleep and speaks of ghosts and wild animals which he believes he sees.... In short, he becomes very trying to his family. Could this not be a simple case of autosuggestion, which occurs frequently among Blacks?

If the patient pleads guilty right from the onset of the illness and begs for mercy, the same sorcerer administers to him a counter-poison, another vegetable powder mixed with a little "chloride of liquid sodium" (inkari!), which immediately neutralizes the effects of rwizilinga. The Batutsi also know that in such cases it helps to give fresh milk to those who have taken the poison.

We are acquainted with a case where nearly ten individuals submitted voluntarily to this test. Only two of them were affected. They were deemed guilty then and there. It so happens that the true culprit was discovered some time later. He had not been subjected to the ordeal.

The people nevertheless continue to praise this judicial procedure. Certain things are even related about the subject which are amazing but untrue, and which do naught but strengthen the prestige of the sorcerers (1). /422/

1. "The European cannot help considering, first and foremost, the physiological effects of the

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poison. Accordingly, /in his own mind, / the results of the ordeal will vary in direct proportion with the strength and amount of the drug taken into the organism. If the dose is sufficiently strong, it will invariably do away with the person who swallows it, whether innocent or guilty. If it is insignificant, it will do no harm to the worst criminal. The Whites consider it extraordinary that the native should disregard such simple truisms.

"The point of view of the Blacks, however, is completely different. The idea of what we call "poison" is not clearly defined in their own minds. They know by experience, no doubt, that certain concoctions have the power of killing those who drink them, they are nevertheless unfamiliar with the mechanics of poisoning, and do not attempt to understand it. They do not even suspect its existence. According to them, these concoctions may be deadly only because they serve as vehicles for mystic forces, just like the remedies which they use to cure diseases and whose effectiveness they explain wholly in this way.... The Blacks do not grasp the actual properties of the test poison, but consider only its mystical and immediate power....

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It is a sort of mystic reagent, and as such it is infallible.

"The native is so convinced of this that often he takes no precautions before undergoing the test. He does not make use of his right to watch while the poison is being prepared, he does not scrutinize the dose to see whether it may not be too strong, the liquid too thick, etc.... Why should he, since the beverage does not act physically, so to speak, but spiritually? It does not matter whether a little less or a little more is swallowed. The outcome of the test does not depend on this...

"Such is the faith they have in trial by ordeal that the natives regard the matter of who pounded the poison into powder as an unimportant detail." (Levy-Bruhl, La Mentalité primitive /The Primitive Mentality/, pp. 250 and 251.)

[181] Full of trust, sure of their innocence, and excessively naïve, the natives are completely blind to the frauds of the sorcerers, who call the accused persons in turn into a hut or to an isolated spot. What crimes and injustices have been committed by those doctors in occult sciences!

Other Judicial Tests

695 A. The drum test. One rubs cow dung on the surface of a drum and pours some water onto it, which the accused gathers in his hands and brings to his lips, while the man who presides over the ordeal loudly cries, "May the shades of the deceased and the spirits

754 and cite numerous examples to this effect. On the other hand, the ingredients used in their manufacture are not yet sufficiently known.

754 278 At best, one hears popular rumors of snakes, toads, human cadavers (imirundi y' abapfuye, n' ingobyi z' abana), crocodiles, etc., whose putrefied flesh was used. The Blacks are also convinced that the lungs of tuberculars are used to transmit the disease to other [164] people (1).

1. This illness is widespread among the Batutsi, who greatly fear it.

They know full well that it is fatal. Hence their great [578] curse, "May you die of tuberculosis!" (uragichwa n' igituntu).

According to popular belief, those lungs are dried out and crushed to powder so as to be slipped more easily into the drinking tube which is used to drink native beer. Menstrual blood (irungu), [84] which inspires in them an intense fear and an acute aversion, is popularly believed to cause slow poisoning when administered to an enemy. It is mixed in with his food secretly. There is also mention of poisonous juices, such as the milk of various kinds of euphorbia [824 847] (imiyenzi, imiduha, etc.) and of certain other plants, for example, muhoko, which is also used to induce abortions. Cactus milk and muhoko juice could only induce death in such quantities that the person involved would not fail to detect them while drinking. It is difficult, therefore, to make frequent use of those substances.

278 824 The Banyarwanda also regard as toxic /488/ the following plants: urwizilinga, umutambasha, and igisura. As we mentioned earlier, urwizilinga is a shrub somewhat similar to datura. It is the plant whose juice or powdered bark is used in trials by ordeal. The umutambasha is another shrub whose leaves are crushed to extract [224] the juice. The Banyarwanda use it to kill rats by mixing it with the food that is used as bait for those rodents.

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824 Igisura belongs to the Urticaceae family.

This plant grows to a height of about 1.50 meters. Sufferers from yaws drink its juice as a remedy. They must be careful not to take too heavy a dose, so as not to risk a serious intoxication.

It is rumored that ill-disposed people have used one or another of those plants, and in particular the mutambasha, or rat poison, to wreak their vengeance and do away with their enemies.

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609 Small packets of herbs were found in the possession of people suspected of practicing the poisoner's vocation.

For what purpose had those plants been gathered? Perhaps the sorcerer had tried to lend them a harmfulness which of themselves they did not possess. Backbiters in the land insist that once at least royal hands mixed those allegedly noxious substances into milk, honey, and butter intended for Europeans who were passi ng through. The said person achieved no results, however, and this led him /or her/ to say that it was impossible to get rid of the Whites, that poisons, spells, and bewitchment had no hold over them. We are inclined to believe that in this case charms and philters were involved rather than noxious substances.

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178 It is said that the penultimate king of the Uswi, Gasusuro, one of the regular suppliers of such products, replied to the court envoys one fine day when they came to fetch the goods that henceforth he would not supply them, that he was through with all poisons. It is also quite /489/ possible that his answer was dictated by the fear of being caught practicing this vocation. Let us add for the sake of truthfulness that the days are long since past when such things could be said or plotted against Europeans (1).

1. The Blacks live in the almost constant fear of bewitchment and poisoning.

[761] Rickets, tuberculosis, and sudden or strange deaths, especially when the corpse swells up immediately, could have no other cause in their opinion.

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How many unfortunate people payed with their lives for having been falsely accused of such supposed misdeeds!

789 The use of charms to win the good graces of Europeans survived
648 only by a few years the use of the above-mentioned poisons. When the latter were tagged as ineffective /to Europeans/, or at least dangerous in their consequences, charms (inzaratsi) were resorted to. The makers of charms, called by the generic name of Abanyamihango, "men of the traditions," exercise a vocation which is regarded as lucrative and honorable as long as the professionals do not overstep the limits of their art.

Public opinion indeed accuses them, most probably wrongly, of deceiving people and giving them poison instead of inoffensive
832 charms. Women, especially, resort to their art and use their powders
●278 to draw upon themselves the attention and favors of an unfaithful or forgetful husband. Sorcerers in this category use for this purpose
[824] the following plants and shrubs: umukunde, which bears the evocative name of "tree of love," umutanga, umugobora, umukeri, a kind of wild bramble, nkurimonga, umuhire, buryoher' imfizi, that is, "the plant that suits the taste of bulls," etc. The makers of philters take the bark, leaves, or roots of those plants and dry them in the sun. The whole thing is crushed and reduced to powder. One need only put a little of this powder into beer or butter, or else /490/ rub it onto a stick or spear, to obtain the desired effect. The neglected wife who manages to make her husband drink this beer will inevitably regain
[302] first place in his heart. The result is the same if the husband anoints his limbs and body with the butter containing the precious powder.

789 The use of a walking stick or the bearing of a spear rubbed
648 with one of those powders will bring good luck to the owner. His words and requests will all be accepted, and those he addresses will be unable to do him any harm.

This is why the king and court dignitaries attempted in their turn to use this simple and effective means of winning over the hearts of the Europeans and of swaying them toward their own needs and

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778 to taste the flesh of the ndatwa, or long-horned cows who walk in the
262 lead of the sacred herds (inyambo).

This exception to the rule illustrates the importance given to the cows in that category.

In order to make sure that this prohibition is heeded, the
[278] keepers allow the rumor to spread that crocodile blood (ingona), which is regarded as a dangerous poison, is used to rub the favorite cows (indatwa). /511/

III. Exhibition of the Objects in the Royal Treasure

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543 Let us mention further that on the occasion of those two important solemnities, the objects in the royal treasure (intore) are exhibited. They include beads of all kinds, necklaces, bracelets, fabrics, small carved bones (intimba), and elaborately worked colobus pelts (inkomo). It seems that prior to the Ruchunchu disaster (1896), when most of the pieces belonging to the famous treasure disappeared in the flames, the collection was so outstanding for its (strictly indigenous) richness and variety that it could hardly be enumerated. It had to be replaced piece by piece.

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543 Only a few colobus pelts and a few lengths of fabric survived the disaster. The most ancient "loincloths" harked back to King Gahindiro whose reign must have ended somewhere between 1840 and 1850! They had been preserved all along with zealous care, for they were regarded as very valuable for the period.

They were designated by the name of impwijima, owing to the character of the striped and streaked fabric.

[648] The kings of Ruanda had obtained them through the good offices of the princes of the Karagwe and Usui, with whom they had entertained amicable relations from time immemorial.

Frequent exchanges of brides from court to court were instrumental in maintaining a certain amity between them. It will be recalled that Ruganzu ran away to his paternal aunt, Nyirabunyana, wife of the potentate of theKaragwe, who was then Ndagara and who had succeeded a certain Luhinda. Because of their proximity to

643 Hence the following beliefs, to which the common people have given credence up to now.

644 In principle, in the old days the sovereign was not permitted
855 to see his heir. The child was entrusted to the care of reliable men and raised far from his father, who occasionally was brought pieces of string which had served to measure the height and waist of his future successor. In order to judge the development and strength of the young prince, the king imprinted the outline of his own foot in a basket of sorghum flour. This was brought to the crown prince, who in turn left in it the imprint of his foot. The basket was returned to the king, who never lost interest in the physical development of his child.

Bows were later sent to him so that he might try his strength. The heir was considered worthy of the throne on the day when he was able to string his father's bow, since now he had become as strong as his father.

643 The last verifications were made. It was necessary to make
762 sure that the king's garment fitted him perfectly, and that the imprint of his feet matched exactly that of his father's. The latter, on the other hand, having grown old and noticed that his beard and hair were greying, (yamez' imvi), decided himself that his time had come. He immediately called his confidants and made known his last wishes. "I am going to depart (gutabara); there are only a few moments left to me. You shall see to it that my son rules (kwimika) in my place. You shall obey him in all things"....

[278] The same evening the appointed sorcerers presented him /516/ with hydromel (inkangaza) in which they had mixed a violent poison, purchased, it is believed, on the shores of Lake Victoria, where it was prepared with putrefied crocodile flesh.

The king went to sleep and never awakened. "He has drunk" (yanyone), as they said in official terminology, or else "He has departed" (yatabaye), he has rejoined his ancestors, the Liberators, who saved the land, "He has ceded the throne" (yatanze), "The sky has fallen" (ijuru ryaguye), for such are the expressions still consecrated by usage and used to proclaim this serious event.